

STUDY SCHEDULE

ACTIVITY	2008			2009				2010
	02	03	04	01	02	03	04	01
Project Initiation	★							
Scoping and Data Collection								
Scoping/Citizen Information Meeting			★					
Purpose and Need								
Preliminary Concept Development & Screening								
Alternatives Development Analysis								
Environmental Studies & Impact Analysis								
Draft EA						★		
Public Hearing							★	
CTB Action							★	
Revised EA								
FHWA Decision								★

STUDY MILESTONES

The Tier 2 I-77/I-81 Overlap study is scheduled to be completed in early 2010. Major milestones are as follows:

- Scoping: Fall 2008
- Tier 2 EA Available for Public Review: Summer 2009
- Public Hearing: Fall 2009
- Commonwealth Transportation Board Action: Winter 2009
- Revised EA: Winter 2010

SUBMITTING COMMENTS

Please review the materials and share your thoughts by using the comment sheet provided with this brochure. If you are not ready to provide your comments tonight, you may submit them by December 15, 2008 to:

Nicholas Nies
Environmental Division
Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 E. Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Or submit comments by email to:
Nicholas.Nies@VDOT.Virginia.gov

For additional information, please call Mr. Nies at (804) 786-1092



I-81 Corridor Improvement Study
Tier 2 I-77/I-81 Overlap
Scoping/Citizen Information Meeting

December 4, 2008
4:00 - 7:00 PM
Fort Chiswell High School

WELCOME

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is studying potential improvements to address existing and future transportation needs in the I-77/I-81 overlap study area. The study area is generally defined as the area north and south of I-77/I-81 between Exit 72 near the Town of Wytheville and Exit 81. The purpose of this meeting is to provide you with preliminary information and seek your input on the scope of issues to be addressed in the study including:

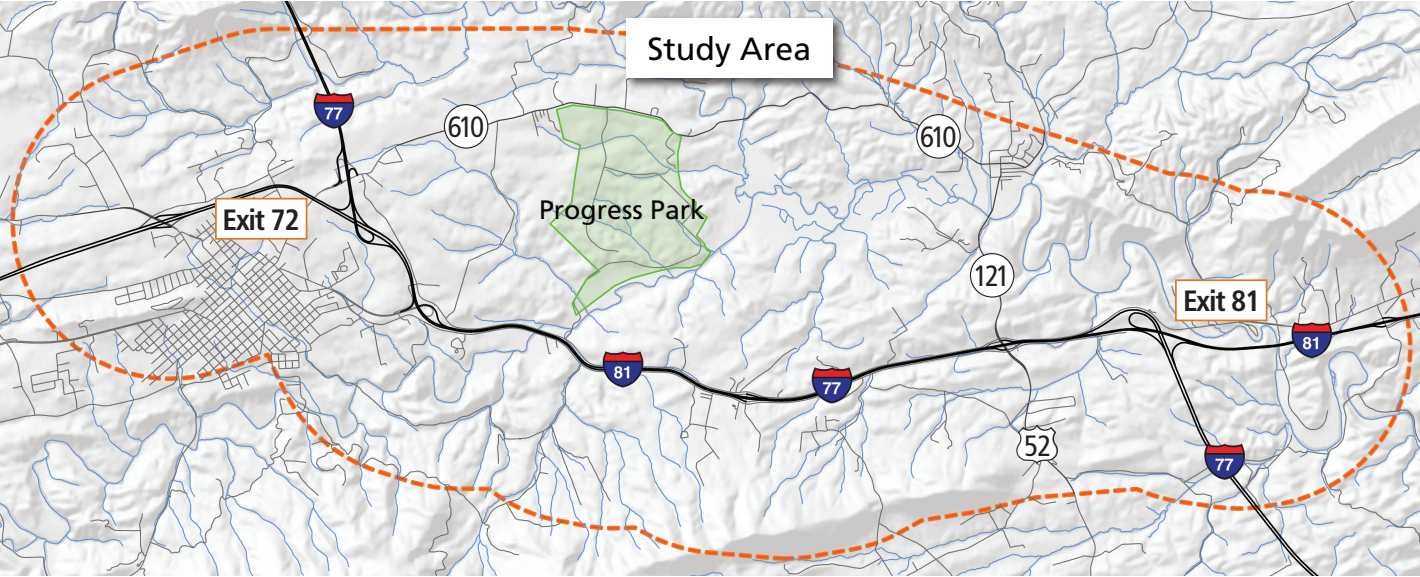
- Purpose and need for the project
- Alternatives to be considered, and
- Environmental impacts.

The displays placed around the room provide information on the limits of the study area, the study process and schedule, the purpose and need for the project, and preliminary conceptual alternatives that have been developed. Representatives of VDOT and its consultants are available to answer your questions and listen to your thoughts and concerns.



BACKGROUND

In 2007, FHWA issued a Record of Decision for the Tier1 I-81 Corridor Improvement Study Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Tier 1 EIS addressed broad transportation needs for the entire 325-mile I-81 corridor in Virginia. Building off of the Tier 1 study, this Tier 2 study will look specifically at the I-77/I-81 overlap study area in greater detail. As part of this study, VDOT will prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) in accordance with the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act. The Environmental Assessment will identify potential solutions for improved travel within the overlap study area and include an evaluation of their environmental impacts.



PURPOSE & NEED

Improvements are needed to increase highway capacity, improve future operating conditions and improve safety along the I-77/I-81 overlap area. Below is traffic information within the overlap area:

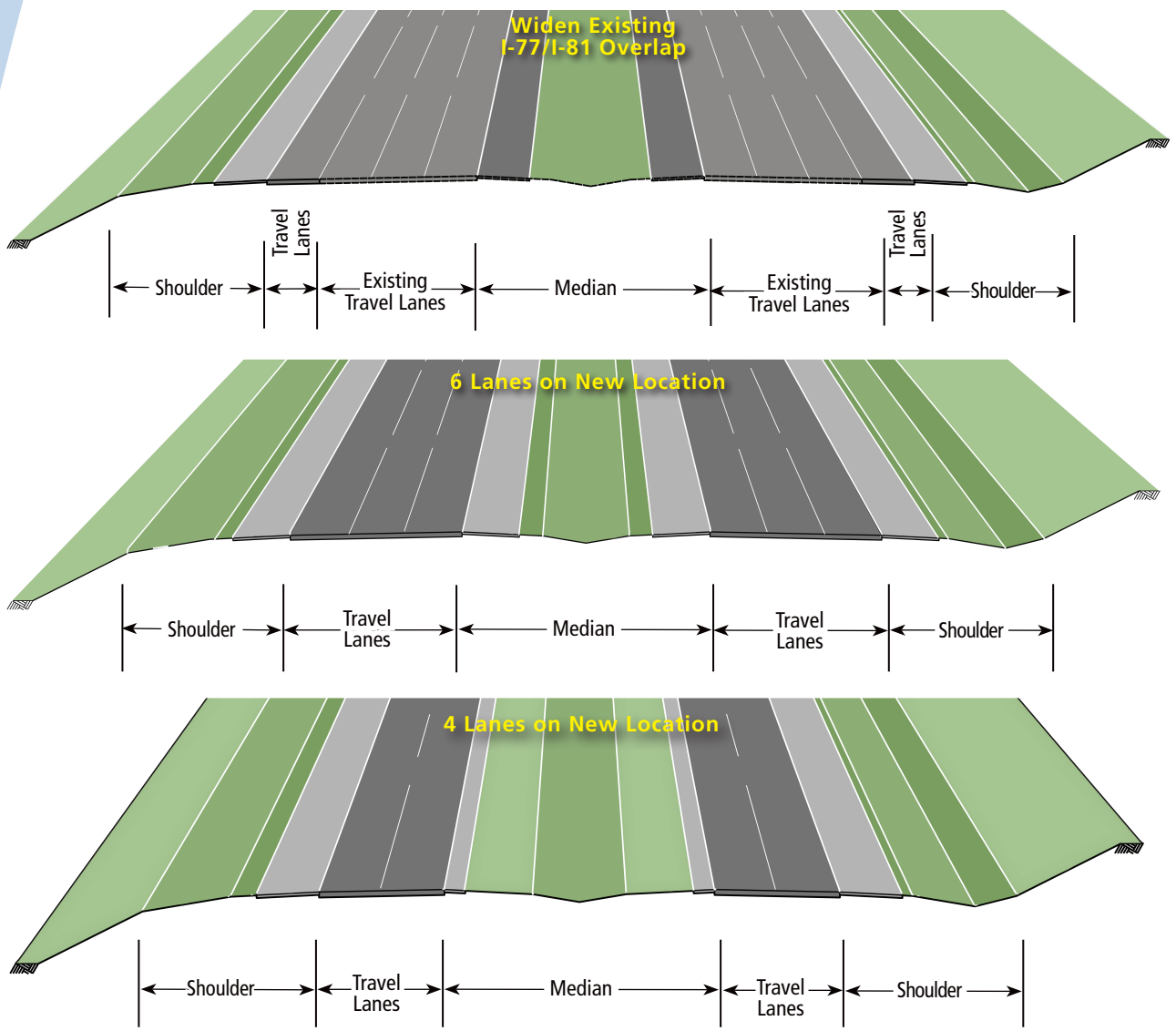
	1978	2008	2035
Daily Traffic	21,400	50,800	100,000
		Existing LOS*	2035 LOS*
I-81 Northbound		B	C
I-81 Southbound		A/B	C/D/E
I-81 NB Ramps		A/B	C/F
I-81 SB Ramps		A/B	C/D/F
Exit 77 Intersections		C/E	F
Exit 80 Intersections		A/C	E/F

* LOS refers to Level of Service, an indication of how well vehicles are traveling. Rated on a scale of A through F, A represents free flow of traffic and F represents severe congestion

PRELIMINARY CONCEPTUAL ALTERNATIVES

The study will evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives to address the existing and future transportation needs in the corridor. Alternatives will include a No Build Alternative and a variety of Candidate Build Alternatives. The Preliminary Conceptual Alternatives shown at today’s meeting represent the first step in developing Build Alternatives to be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. In addition to looking at widening the existing I-77/ I-81 facility, the study will explore options for separating the two interstates via alignments on new locations. Typical sections for these options are shown below and are based on projected traffic volumes in 2035.

After today’s meeting, all of the preliminary conceptual alternatives will go through a screening process in order to narrow down the number of alternatives to be studied in detail in the Environmental Assessment.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the “No-Build” alternative?

The No-Build alternative is to take no action other than what is already scheduled in VDOT’s Six-Year Program. Have you already decided where to build the road? VDOT has not made, and will not make, the decision on where to build any new road. VDOT compiles factual information to meet National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements for impartial review of all alternatives, including the No-Build. Citizens who make up the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB), a body appointed by the Governor, and the Federal Highway Administration make the ultimate decisions regarding the selection of any build alternative. These decisions are made following the completion of the Environmental Assessment and the Location Public Hearing.

When would anything approved in this Study actually be built?

The environmental process has to be completed before any construction can occur. If a ‘build’ option is selected, design and construction documents must also be prepared and the right of way acquired. The entire process would take several years, assuming funding availability.

Is there funding to construct?

As of today, there is no funding for construction. If a build alternative is selected, VDOT will examine possible funding sources. Allocations of funding for construction are made annually with the update of the Six-Year Program.

How much will the entire project cost?

It depends entirely on the alternative decided upon by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB). If a build alternative is selected, costs will depend on the type of facility (e.g. type of access-control, interchange vs.

intersection), the number of access points, and the number of lanes. The Environmental Assessment will include cost estimates for different alternatives.

How does this relate to other I-81 studies?

An initial study for the I-77/I-81 Overlap area was started in 2000. However, this study was placed on hold pending the completion of Tier 1 of the I-81 Corridor Improvement Study. The Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision completed as part of that study identified the I-77/I-81 Overlap area as a section for further analysis in Tier 2.

What is Tiering?

Tiering is a procedure for completing the NEPA process in separate stages, known as tiers. Tiering is flexible and allows certain issues to be addressed in first and second tier environmental documents. Unlike a traditional Draft and Final EIS and Record of Decision, decision-making in a tiered process can be tailored to a particular situation. The I-81 Corridor Improvement Study was designed to consist of a Tier 1 Draft EIS, a Tier 1 Final EIS, and a Tier 1 Record of Decision, followed by Tier 2 NEPA document(s). Site-specific analyses and approvals will be elements of Tier 2 studies. See Chapter 1 of the Tier 1 Final EIS at www.I-81.org for additional information on the tiered process.

When will the public have an opportunity to participate in the Study?

There will be numerous opportunities for public participation in the study, including a scoping/citizen information meeting, a location public hearing, and an Internet website. Additionally, if the project moves into the design stage, the public will be afforded additional opportunities to participate. For example, at the appropriate time in the design stage a design public hearing will be held.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

Once the Candidate Build Alternatives to be studied are identified, the Environmental Assessment will examine their potential environmental impacts based on detailed studies, field reviews, and resource agency input. The environmental resources to be studied include the following:

- Air quality
- Noise impacts
- Cultural resources/historic properties
- Threatened and endangered species
- Parks and recreation areas
- Wetlands and streams
- Farmland
- Social and economic considerations
- Hazardous materials

